

Amendments to the Specification:

Please replace paragraph 4, on page 14 with the following amended paragraph:

- - Assuming that the customer initiates the session within the timeout period, step 408 is next performed to run scripted control instructions to handle the rest of the session. The preferred embodiment uses a proprietary script language, "Plaid," which is detailed ~~in the Appendix~~ further below. If an agent has not been assigned to the call at this point the script, at step 410, directs the task to wait for an agent assignment. As mentioned, an agent can self-assign to a session. Or agents can be automatically assigned as detailed in the next section of this specification. Agents can also be assigned by an agent supervisor, or by other appropriate means. The present invention allows much flexibility in the assignment of agents to calls. Much of the agent-assignment aspect of the system is configurable within the call center so that different call center operations can choose the most suitable way of assignment. For example, one option is that after a time period if no agent has self-assigned, or been otherwise assigned, the task is instructed to check other groups or pools of agents. Some call centers may divide agents into groups based on the types of questions being handled, communication type being used for the session, experience or expertise of agents, etc. - -

Please replace paragraph 3, on page 16 with the following amended paragraph:

- ~~The process of assigning an agent to a call occurs at step 312 in Fig. 2C. This process is executed after WRU escalation process 250 in Fig. 2B determines that a~~ customer's call should be assigned to an agent. Although there are many possible ways to determine whether and how agents, and agent endpoints, are assigned, the present invention operates using the following criteria. - -

Please replace paragraph 1, on page 18 with the following amended paragraph:

- -Another refinement is to assign calls based on customer ranking. For example, a customer ranking according to level of service (e.g. whether the customer is a "gold,"

“platinum,” overly-repetitive, etc. customer) can be implemented to assign a number to customers that allows a customer to be moved up in a queue, ~~such as queue 314 of Fig. 2C,~~ to be assigned to a different queue, or to otherwise gain priority over other customer calls. For example, customers who have emergency situation can be passed through to an agent regardless of their position in a queue. Or even regardless of the availability of agents according to the normal approach using the ratios above. - -

Please replace paragraph 3, on page 18 with the following amended paragraph:

- -Fig. 3A shows agent client main screen 400 as it appears on an agent’s computer system display. Screen 400 includes a standard set of pull-down menus at ~~402~~ 502, a row of buttons at ~~404~~ 504 windows area ~~408~~ 508, additional buttons at row ~~406~~ 506 and indicators at row ~~410~~ 510. - -

Please replace paragraph 4, on page 18 with the following amended paragraph:

- -Row of buttons ~~404~~ 504 includes (from left to right) separate buttons for agent login/logout, opening an endpoint, closing all endpoints, creating a new resource, viewing the WebCenter home page, requesting a display of customer data and opening a ~~NetMeeting[®]~~ NetMeeting[®] session (note: ~~NetMeeting[®]~~ NetMeeting[®] is a facility provided by software manufactured by Microsoft Corp.). The “agent login/logout” button is pushed by the agent prior to performing work and after the agent’s shift has complete. This button notifies the system that the agent is online and is used to start and stop timing and recordkeeping with respect to a particular agent. The “open endpoint” button is pressed by an agent when that agent wants to increase the number of endpoints assigned to that particular agent. - -

Please replace paragraph 1, on page 19 with the following amended paragraph:

- -Window ~~430~~ 530 endpoints that are currently active, or in use. Each active endpoint is identified with an icon, such as endpoint icon ~~440~~ 540, and with the associated customer’s name, if available, or with other identifying information. The

preferred embodiment uses color coding to indicate how long a customer has been waiting for a response from the agent. In the preferred embodiment, the endpoint icon is green when the customer is not waiting for a response from the agent. This is the case where the agent has just typed a reply to the customer. After a customer completes a response then the customer's endpoint icon becomes yellow. If the agent does not response to the customer by typing a reply within a predetermined abmount of time then the customer's icon becomes red. Thus, the color scheme serves as an effective visual cue to alert an agent to a customer who has been waiting too long for a response. Such a visual cue is not intrusive and allows the agent to continue to handle other customers' calls and to ignore the cue, if necessary. - -

Please replace paragraph 3, on page 19 with the following amended paragraph:

- -Returning to Fig. 3A "Initial question" window 438 displays the initial question for the current customer. The current customer is the customer that is highlighted in the endpoint window. In the example shown in Fig. 3A, the current customer is "Bill." The current customer can by selected by the agent. The agent can click on a customer's name, use the tab key, or use another control to select among the active endpoints. As the current customer changes, that customer's initial question I displayed in window 438.- -

Please replace paragraph 1, on page 20 with the following amended paragraph:

- -Communication window 432 532 shows the dialogue between the customer and agent. Agent and customer responses are displayed in this window. The window scrolls up, as needed, similar to a word processing window. - -

Please replace paragraph 2, on page 20 with the following amended paragraph:

- -Resource window 434 534 allows an agent to send pre-defined resources such as a Uniform Resource Locator address or ready-made text to the customer. The agent merely double-clicks on a resource icon to send the associated resource. Alternately, the

interface can provide for “drag and drop” of the resources into communication window ~~432~~ 532. The “Send URL” and “Say” buttons can also be used to conveniently ~~transfer~~ transfer information to the customer. The “Say” button is used to display a selected resource, or text, as text on a customer’s screen. The “Send URL” button causes the text to be interpreted as a URL and replaces the customer’s web content frame with the web page defined at the URL. These buttons are useful where, for example, a URL is desired to be merely sent as informative text, or where a URL embedded in text is desired to be used to direct customer’s display to a specific web page. - -

Please replace paragraph 4, on page 20 with the following amended paragraph:

- -Resource creation window ~~436~~ 536 is activated by the “create new resources” button discussed above. When the button is pressed, window ~~436~~ 536 becomes the active window and allows the agent to type text or a URL and to save the text or URL as a resource in resource window ~~434~~ 534. - -

Please replace paragraph 6, on pages 20-21 with the following amended paragraph:

- -Fig. 3C shows the “pager” display of the agent interface. This display allows agents to send messages to each other and to receive messages from other agents. It is similar to an email interface in that sent or received messages, or pages, can be displayed in main window 560. Sent or received message display can be selected by pull-down menu 562. An address book or page (shown) display is selectable at 564. Additional buttons on the pager display include button 566 to bring up an offline task list, button 568 to display data wake information, button 570 to display customer records, button 572 to start a NetMeeting™ session, button 574 to enable invisible mode (for supervisors only), button 576 to create a new page, button 578 to set agent information and button 580 ~~Page-22~~ which creates a “minichat” window for conversations with other Agents. ~~Page-22~~ “Invisible mode” applies only to Agent Supervisors. All functions work identically, except that the participants in the room don’t see any indication that the supervisor is entering or leaving the room. - -

Please replace paragraph 1, on page 31 with the following amended paragraph:

- -Plaid is the scripting language used by Acuity's WebACD to customize how tasks are routed as they arrive off of the web site. The name Plaid is a word, not an acronym. ~~If you are a die hard telecom person and feel that it must be an acronym, then it stands for People Learning Acronyms Is Dumb.~~" This document explains what one should consider when building Plaid scripts as well as the syntax of the language. - -

Please replace paragraph 2, on page 32 with the following amended paragraph:

- - Topic through the WRU. In the WRU, there is a concept of a topic. Questions answer pairs are grouped by topic so customers can browser through the questions and answers, looking for the information they need. When creating a topic in the WRU, the administrator is also asked to specify a task type for the WebACD so when a customer escalates from a certain topic, the WebACD knows which task type to use. Many topics can go to one task type, but there must be at least one topic per task type. Typically a customer must select a topic when asking a questions, so if there are a very large number of topics, the customer may be confused as to which one to ~~selete~~ select. - -

Please replace paragraph 3, on page 32 with the following amended paragraph:

- -Selection of task type from drop down. When the customer asks a question, he can pick a task type from a list that is populated from the WebACD. Again, if there are too many task types or their names are not meaningful to a customer, then the customer may be confused as to which task type to select. - -